Orientals in the U.S. 20:6

A Survey of Race Relations on the Pacific Coast

Jointly Undertaken by
Five Pacific Coast Regional Committees
and
The Institute of Social and Religious Research
New York City.

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A Survey of Race Relations on the Pacific Coast

What happens when races of different culture, and political, economic and social background live side by side?

What is the experience of the Pacific Coast with the "Asiatic Invasion" of North America?

What are the permanent causes of irritation and conflict that arise from such racial contacts? What causes of friction are subject to change? Under what conditions and by what means is racial accommodation most likely to take place?

Are these alien races a liability or an asset to the Pacific Coast?

Who is taking their place and who will do the work which they have performed?

Is Asiatic and Mexican labor cheap or expensive labor?

Is the prosperity of the Pacific Coast dependent upon Asiatics or upon any other labor group? What is the trend of the second generation of Asiatics? Are they adjusting themselves to American standards and ideals?

These are problems in which the whole Pacific World is interested, but they are especially vital to the people of the Pacific Slope, for, with Hawaii, this territory forms the laboratory where the solution will ultimately be found. It is these problems with which the Race Relations Survey is concerned and upon which it hopes to throw light.

SURVEY AIM AND METHOD

The Survey is an un-official investigation jointly conducted by a group of Pacific Coast committees and a research foundation in New York. It is a unique project because it is funding the view-point on the Oriental of all the major groups of citizens, through the service of such people upon the directing committees of the Survey.

To the expert leadership of specialists, it is adding the experience of the ordinary man with the Oriental. The Survey is also dealing with the reaction of the Asiatic to his American environment.

The Survey seeks to impose no program, advocates no specific policy and champions no special interest. It aims to find the facts, and all the facts, and plans to make them accessible to the public.

SURVEY PROGRESS

Originating as an imported idea, the Survey is established in the research institutions of the Pacific Coast and has won the status of an indigenous movement. After nine months of intensive investigation and the organization of local research councils, Dr. Robert E. Park, the Research director, has returned to the University of Chicago where he is organizing the findings of the Survey.

UNIVERSITY LEADERSHIP

The leadership of the project is now in the hands of Coast specialists and committees.

Research councils representing twelve universities from British Columbia to Los Angeles are assisting the Survey and directing the studies of seventy students and workers on specific projects. The leaders of these research groups are Drs. Boggs, of British Columbia, McKenzie of Washington, Parsons of Oregon, Holmes of Berkeley, Mears of Stanford and Bogardus of Los Angeles.

Two hundred and ten persons, representing differing view-points and interests, are serving on regional and local committees from Vancouver to the Mexican border.

Six hundred documents, comprising 5,500 typewritten pages, covering many phases of race relations, have been filed and will be used in the reports of the Survey findings. Additions to this material are constantly being received.

WIDE SPREAD COOPERATION

The California State Federation of Farm Bureaus has lent its machinery and influence to the Survey in organizing seven county Committees. Chambers of Commerce, both state and local, have cooperated by calling together representative groups and by wide distribution of questionnaires. The California Development Association endorsed the Survey at its June meeting at Arrowhead lake, and has extended every possible facility for securing data.

The Agricultural aspects of the Survey are in the hands of Dr. Eliot G. Mears, of Stanford.

Remarkable cooperation from every part of the Coast is being given this central survey project, the voluntary assistance of Farm Bureaus and local Chambers of Commerce being supplemented by professional field investigation.

The compilation of the survey statistics is under the supervision of Dr. Louis Bloch, the statistician of the State Labor Commission.

From these numerous sources an increasing volume of invaluable material is in preparation. This material represents the experience of the Pacific Coast with its racial problem, but it is being subjected to the critical analysis of the leading specialists of its educational institutions.

SURVEY FINDINGS

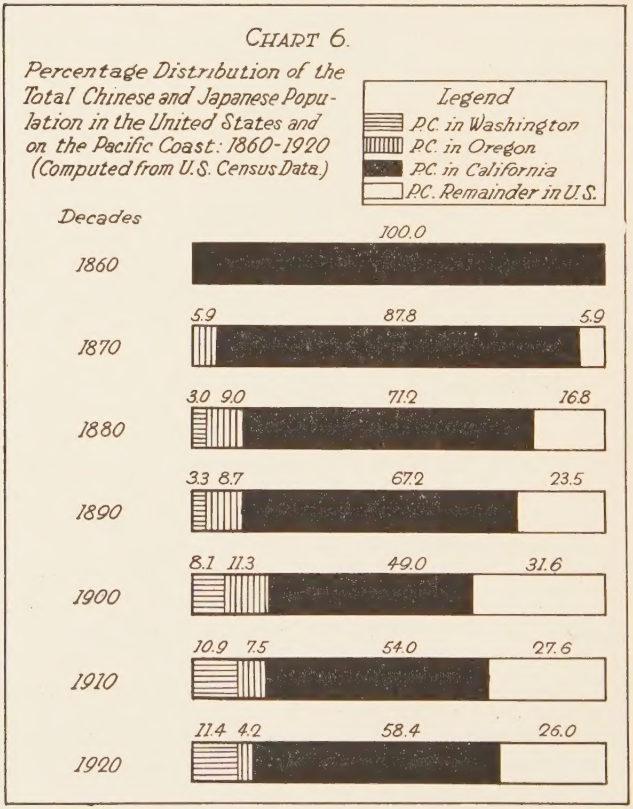
The Survey wishes to share some of its tentative findings with the public. From the large volume of material already collected, definite trends are emerging, which, while by no means conclusive, indicate some interesting conditions.

The definite findings of the Survey will appear during 1925 in a series of volumes edited by the director and his Coast associates. These will deal with the principal sociological, economic and cultural aspects of the race problem. Agriculture, Vital Statistics, the Oriental Community, Religions, etc., will be dealt with as separate monographs.

In order to show certain fundamental features underlying the race problem, authentic graphs are submitted, based on reliable data, compiled by Louis Bloch, the statistician of the State Labor Commission. These graphs are original and represent the latest available statistics of the U. S. Census and the California State Bureau of Vital Statistics.

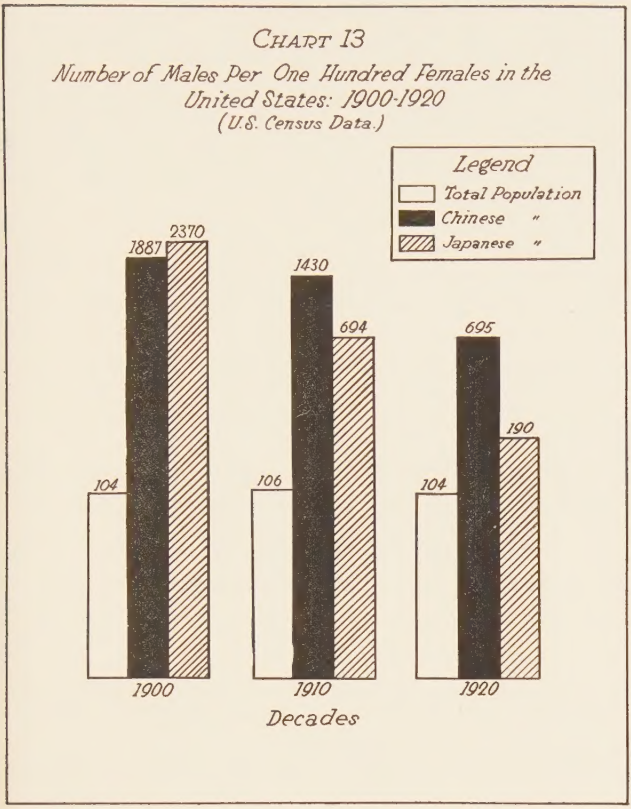
PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF THE TOTAL CHINESE AND JAPANESE POPULATION IN THE UNITED STATES AND ON THE PACIFIC COAST. 1860-1920.

Computed from U. S. Census.



NUMBER OF MALES (CHINESE AND JAPANESE) PER 100 FEMALES IN THE UNITED STATES: 1900-1920

U. S. Census Data



Communities of Men

The first Chinese and Japanese communities on the Pacific Coast were communities of men. It was cheaper to support a wife in Asia than in America. But whereas the Chinese males still outnumber the females in the ratio of six to one, the sex ratio in the Japanese population of the Coast has been rapidly equalized until there is now one woman to a fraction less than two men.

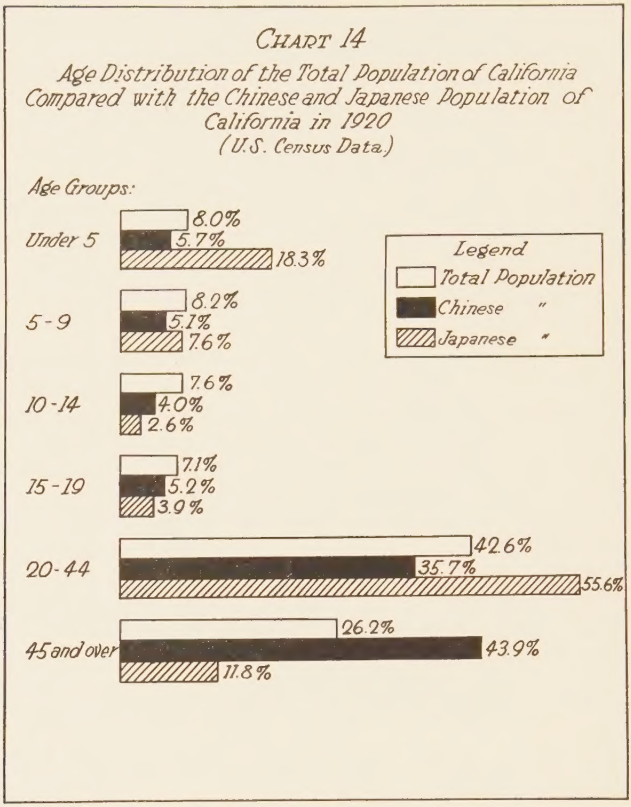
This matter of population balance has an enormous influence on the social, economic and political problems, created by the presence of these racial groups.

The chart explains why many of our Chinatowns are centers of the slave traffic, gambling and other forms of vice, and why the Japanese have been regarded with anxiety from the stand-point of birth-rate.

The Chinese merchant prefers to raise his family in Canton. America may yield him a pot of gold, but it proves a poor place to inculcate the Chinese virtues into his boys and girls. The Japanese, on the other hand, pioneers with wife and baby, and each additional child constitutes an additional stake in his adopted land.

AGE DISTRIBUTION OF THE TOTAL WHITE POPULATION OF CALIFORNIA COMPARED WITH THE CHINESE AND JAPANESE POPULATION OF CALIFORNIA. 1920

U. S. Census Data



A Young Age Group

The Oriental age groups on the Pacific Coast are very young. 55% of the Japanese are in early middle life, and only 11.8% are above 44 years, as compared with 26.2% of the total population. Children under five years form 18.3% of the Japanese group, as compared with 8% of the whole population.

The Chinese show an abnormally low percentage of children of any age, compared with their whole number, due to conditions already dealt with.

Japanese Birth Rate

The increase of the Japanese birth rate has kept step with the incoming of their women.

As shown in the following chart, the stoppage of "Picture Brides," in 1920, was soon followed by a marked decrease in the ratio of births.

The low death rate and high birth rate are partly due to the preponderance of young and vigorous emigrants and the absence of unmarried women, the old, the infirm and the upper class Japanese among whom the birth rate is low.

A rate of five births to one death in such a race group lends itself to alarming, if warranted, estimates of population growth.

However, in a study of the comparative fecundity of our race groups, the high birth tendency of all immigrant stocks, the check upon size of family in second and third generations of foreign descent due to economic and educational forces, and the rapid ageing of the group must all be considered.

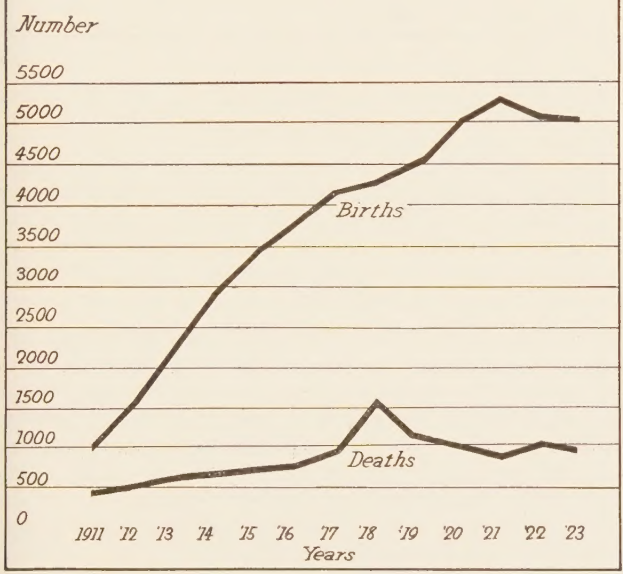
A study of 278 families of Japanese workers in thirty-one lumber mills of Washington, made in the summer of 1924, gives an average of 1.45 children to the families of the group. These figures must be checked by reference to the average period of the married life of the parents which was only 8.8 years.

ANNUAL NUMBER OF JAPANESE BIRTHS COMPARED WITH THE ANNUAL NUMBER OF JAPANESE DEATHS 1911-1923

California State Bureau of Vital Statistics

CHART 16.

Annual Number of Japanese Births Compared with the Annual Number of Japanese Deaths: 1911-1923 (Official Figures of the California State Bureau of Vital Statistics.)



INTERMARRIAGE

Clear biological evidence against intermarriage is lacking. The problem is primarily a social and cultural problem. The child is caught between two racial cultures and in the resulting conflict he suffers.

Where White and Oriental communities are living side by side their young people are not inter-marrying. Racial intermarriage usually takes place where the forces of primary social control are weak or absent.

White women who marry Orientals, with notable exceptions, marry the first Oriental whom they have known. While there are striking cases of happy racial intermarriage, unhappiness, incompatibility and social ostracism are frequent.

Such unions subject the principals to great social, cultural and spiritual strain.

The Eurasian Child

The Eurasian child passes every physical and mental test. Cases like the San Jose Japanese-American family in which the four children were shown to approach the "genius class" by the Binet intelligence test, indicate interesting possibilities from such marriages. However, the words of a brilliant attorney in Canada whose father was British and mother Chinese reveal the bitterness of the mature Eurasian outlook on life; "The Eurasian child should be given the legal right, on his twenty-first birthday, to shoot his father, mother and himself, if he wishes."

WHEN EAST MEETS WEST

East and West do not understand each other. The capacity of Western Civilization for bridging the Pacific Ocean has outstripped its ability to solve the racial and cultural problems that its enterprise has brought upon itself.

It is probable that East understands West far better than West understands East, but both sides have shared in the process of disillusionment.

As wide apart as sunset from sunrise are certain ethical processes of the Eastern and Western conscience. In an immigration office of a Northwest port, the following was overheard: "John, tell me why you Chinese who are so honest in business dealings are so crooked in smuggling yourselves into America?" "Sure, very easy. When I tell business lie, it hurt you, make you big loss. When I tell immigration lie, it no hurt you; no hurt anybody. God never say Chinese no can come in America."

Too Much "God Damn" Round Little Baby

On the other hand, the impassive face hides certain emotions and aspirations identical with those of the West. Tom Lee had worked on a Delta ranch for years. Fortune had favored him with the confidence of his employer, with a good wife and two babies. One day Tom asked for his time. Yes, he was satisfied with work, wages, hours and kind master, but still he would go. "Master very good master, but all time make swear talk round little baby. No want baby hear bad talk. Too much 'God damn' round little baby".

LIFE HISTORY OF THE IMMIGRANT

The Survey is gathering hundreds of life stories of Chinese, Filipinos, Hindus, Japanese and Mexicans who have come to America. Here the processes of conflict, adjustment disillusionment, success and failure are shown. Here are revealed the impressions which American life stamps upon the alien mind.

Disillusions

Believing in the America of Washington, Franklin and Lincoln, confident in the idealism of the missionary, looking for a land where liberty, equality and brotherhood are exemplified by all and shown to all, the Oriental Student coming to America finds bitter disillusionment. From his detention at the immigration station to his discovery that Orientals are not welcomed in respectable rooming districts in barbershops nor in Y. M. C. A. dormitories or swimming pools, the land of his dreams rapidly fades, before the America of his experience.

EFFECT OF ANTI-ALIEN LAND LAWS

There has been an exodus of Chinese, Koreans and Hindus from the rice lands of Glenn and Colusa counties. A trend of Japanese from North to South is apparent during 1924. Many are drawn to retail business or to truck gardens of the Los Angeles area. Some have returned to Japan or have settled in Mexico.

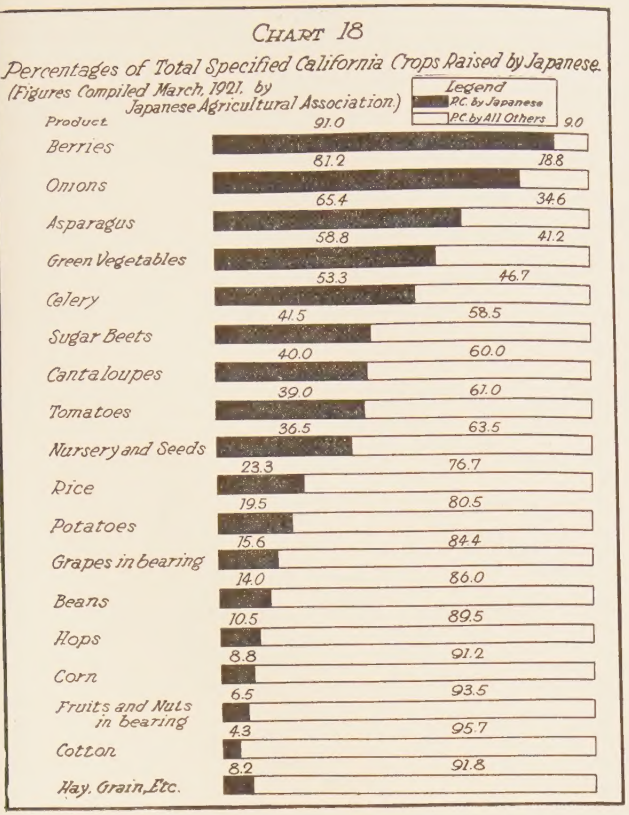
Agents of Southern Railroads and industrial interests have been negotiating in California with groups of Japanese for colonizing certain districts in the Southern states. A majority of the Orientals affected by the land laws are making no move and are waiting for a better day.

THE MEXICAN MIGRATION

An important effect of the Anti-Alien Land Laws is the stimulus given to Mexican employment in California. 87,648 Mexicans entered the United States in the twelve months ending June 30, 1924. This is nearly five times the number that came in during 1922. A large percentage gave California as their future permanent home. Under the Immigration Act of July 1st, 1924, Mexicans were placed in the non-quota class of immigrants, who may enter in unlimited numbers, provided they pass the literacy test and pay the required fee. In 1923, 18,744 Mexican children were enrolled in the public schools of Los Angeles. Mexicans are settling in increasing numbers in every industrial and agricultural section of the state, and are supplanting the Whites and Orientals in many fields of labor. The Mexican presents interesting problems in labor economics and also in social costs to the municipality and state.

PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL SPECIFIED CALIFORNIA CROPS RAISED BY JAPANESE, AS OF MARCH, 1921

Figures compiled by Japanese Agricultural Association.



THE JAPANESE FACTOR IN CALIFORNIA AGRICULTURE

A racial group constituting less than three percent of the population of California produces 69% of five of the basic state crops and 57.2% of nine principal crops. All nine of the crops call for intensive cultivation and are among the so-called squatting industries.

The Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce stated in a report on the place of the Japanese in the agriculture of the state, "86% of all the vegetable production is in their hands, almost 100% of the berry industry, 98% of the local markets and 60% of the out of state markets, both green and fresh vegetables are under their control. At the present time (1921), you cannot buy a strawberry in the city of Los Angeles unless you buy it from an Asiatic. The Japanese monopoly of this commodity is 100%."

THE ORIENTAL COMMUNITY

The Oriental communities on the Pacific Coast are products of social, economic and racial laws. The Chinatowns reproduce to a large degree the culture, customs and activities of China. They form eddies in the stream of American life.

The large Japanese community tends to be both self-sufficient and nationalistic, and is highly organized, but has made many adjustments to its environment.

The process of Americanization, is far more rapid in the small community; still more rapid with the scattered Oriental family, which in language, economic and cultural interests is dependent upon the American environment.

A comparative study of two widely contrasted Japanese communities, Florin and Livingston, California, indicate factors that retard and accelerate the accommodation process.

PRINCIPLES OF ACCOMMODATION

The Livingston Japanese developed a tract of barren soil. They are a selected group with a high average ability and character. A majority are Christians and have identified themselves with the religious interests of the town.

They have remained ranchers and have never competed with their White neighbors in business.

They have let the White Man run "Main Street". They have promoted the interests of the whole community instead of their own interests.

They have limited the Japanese community to seventy families and have guarded Livingston from the entry of undesirable Japanese.

On the other hand, the Japanese of Florin, at almost every point, represent an opposite policy from the Livingston group.

The Florin Colony has an unsavory reputation, while a week of investigation of the Livingston situation failed to disclose any White criticism of the local Japanese.

THE SECOND GENERATION

The younger generation of Orientals is not following the footsteps of its fathers. It is leaving the farm for the city. It is securing the best education that the state can afford. It is struggling for economic and professional status in our towns and cities.

An important problem of the younger generation is the cleavage with the Oriental home standards and culture. Parents find a widening gulf between themselves and their children, a gulf that is being dug by the public school system and the whole whirl of modern American life and is hopelessly separating them in speech, thought and ideals from the old people and their Asia.

The culture and restraints of home and parents are lost before the sources of self-control and wise adjustment in the new order are found.

Burning His Bridges

The vocational problem of the American-born Oriental is another unique obstacle. Even when graduating from our universities with honors in chemistry, engineering, etc., he can secure only inferior positions, with small chance of advancement. His American education unfits him for success in Asia. He has burned his bridges in his rear: he is a drug on the market of the land of his birth. Discouragement, a fruit stand or a common labor job bid for him.

The second generation Oriental, as a rule, considers himself an American and seeks for status in American life. Such status and recognition is more easily found as he separates himself from his racial group.

Eastern cities and schools are drawing an increasing number of native born Orientals, for in the East recognition of individual ability is more readily accorded.

The large Chinatowns on the Pacific Coast are so closely tied by commercial contacts to China that native born Chinese are frequently drawn back to the mother country. The American born Japanese, however, have largely cut their cultural bonds with Japan and they have no other recourse than to remain in America.

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF 59,000 JAPANESE IN CENTRAL AND NORTHERN CALIFORNIA IN MARCH, 1924 BY OCCUPATION

Computed from data compiled by Japanese Consulate

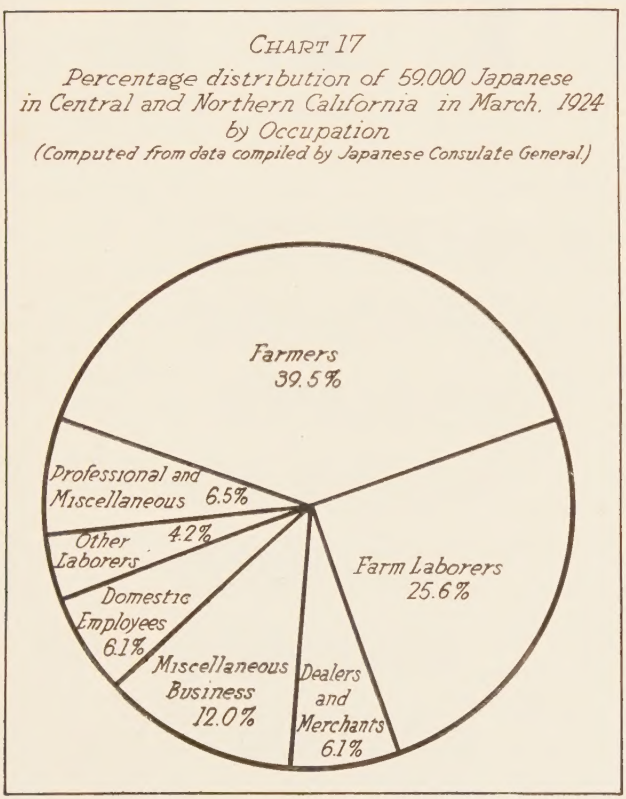


CHART 17
Percentage distribution of 59,000 Japanese in Central and Northern California in March, 1924 by Occupation
(Computed from data compiled by Japanese Consulate General)
Farmers 39.5%
Professional and Miscellaneous 6.5%
Other Laborers 4.2%
Domestic Employees 6.1%
Miscellaneous Business 12.0%
Dealers and Merchants 6.1%
Farm Laborers 25.6%

INDUSTRIAL COMPETITION

Fishing

Three out of every five fishermen in British Columbia are Japanese. Of a total of 5,063 licenses issued in the Province in 1922, 3,151 were held by them. "The Japanese are not better fishermen than Whites, but they are always on the job. They have ousted Canadians because they will work harder and when times are bad they will live on less.

Of a total of 2,352 commercial fishing licenses issued in Southern California in 1922, 875, or 37%, were taken by Japanese. However, Japanese represented only 53% of all alien fishermen in the district. This percentage dropped from 64% in 1919 to 43% in 1923.

93% of the sardine catch of 1922, 61% of the Albacore, 77% of the Yellow Fin Tuna and 89% of the Skipjack was taken by Japanese.

Japanese fishermen had $1,350,000 invested in boats, nets and equipment. The fishermen of twenty-four other nationalities in the San Pedro district had $2,000,000 invested. (1922)

Lumbering

An authority on British Columbia industry says: "Before the War there were no Japanese in the logging industry of the Province. This year, (1922) there are over 600 Japanese and 275 Chinese loggers at work in the old Crown granted timber limits.

There are 40 Japanese logging camps on the Crown lumber lands, alone. In addition the Japanese dominate the single bolt industry.

Sawmills

37 of the 873 sawmills of Washington employ Japanese, with an aggregate of 1,458 out of a total payroll of 57,115 men in the industry, or 2.55%.

The Japanese are a decreasing factor in the lumber industry of the State, their number having dropped from 2,685 in 1907, to 1,458 in 1924—a shrinkage of 54%. There are 94 Hindu workers and 156 Filipinos and no Chinese in the industry. They are not in competition with skilled White labor.

WHAT THE SURVEY IS COSTING

The Survey has cost $33,500 to date, November 15th, 1924.

Of this sum, the New York Institute has paid $25,000, (its full quota) and the Pacific Coast Committees have paid $8,500, or less than one third of their quota, of the estimated Survey Budget of $55,000.

In addition to the $33,500 already spent, $5,000 more is needed to complete the project, particularly the Coast wide Agricultural study and the compilation of statistics.

These central aspects of the Survey cannot be completed on the basis of the voluntary service with which so much of the survey data has been gathered.

Those interested should send their cheques to Survey of Race Relation, 660 Phelan Building, San Francisco, or to any Survey Regional Treasurer.

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